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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - APRIL 10, 2009

11. (U) CROATIA CELEBRATES JOINING NATO

Croatia marked its accession to NATO on April 7 first by raising the flag of the Alliance at the Ministry of Defense (MOD). During his official remarks at the ceremony, President Mesic said that the NATO flag should remind Croatia of the path it had chosen, the path of peace in unity with Croatia's allies. PM Sanader, who had just flown back from the flag raising ceremony for Croatia and Albania at NATO headquarters earlier in the day, told the press in front of MOD that Croatia joining NATO was "the culmination of the endeavor that began with independence and resisting military aggression, that led to the current international position of the country." Later in the evening on April 1, Croatia's NATO accession was further celebrated during a performance at the Croatian National Theater. In his speech at the event PM Sanader stated that in a 15 year time period Croatia had gone from being a country that was the recipient of international assistance to one that had taken on the responsibility to participate in key decisions affecting global security. President Mesic noted that while Croatia should be satisfied by its achievement it should also realistically assess what responsibilities it had assumed by entering NATO. The Speaker of the Sabor, Luka Bebic, government ministers, members of parliament, military personnel, representatives of the diplomatic community, and other prominent figures attended both events. (PD'Amico)

12. (U) INDEPENDENT ACADEMICS JOIN FORCES TO CONTEST MAYOR BANDIC:

Josip Kregar, one time interim mayor of Zagreb and current Dean of the Law Faculty, has joined forces with another independent candidate for Zagreb mayor, Economic Professor Velimir Srica. Kregar will remain the candidate for mayor for their combined non-party group and Srica will top their list for head of the city council. The two candidates, who tout on every occasion their personal integrity, have produced a local election ethics code, which will guide their campaign activities and ensure to the public that will govern transparently. Recent telephone polls put their combined first round strength at near 20%, compared to about 30% for Bandic, but their campaign is gaining strength and it is becoming more likely that the Zagreb mayoral contest will be decided in an increasingly competitive second round run-off between Kregar and Bandic. (DMeges)

13. (U) COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY HONORS FORMER SECRETARY RON BROWN HELD IN DUBROVNIK:

On April 3, 2009 the Ambassador participated in a memorial service in Dubrovnik honoring former Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown. The service, held annually, marks the date of the tragic air crash outside of Dubrovnik of the plane carrying Secretary Brown and 34 others (including Commerce employees and business leaders) who were involved in a regional trade mission. Ambassador Bradtke, Dubrovnik Deputy Mayor Kisic, and Chief of the Cabinet and International

Cooperation for Dubrovnik-Neretva County AIDA Cvjetkovic, made remarks at the ceremony. Afterwards, the Ambassador, Senior Commercial Officer Pamela Ward, Director of Cilipi Airport Toni Peovic, and other county and city government officials and airport representatives hiked up the Mt. St. Ivan mountainside to the site of the crash and placed flowers and candles at the memorial that has been erected there. The Ambassador expressed the U.S. government's great appreciation of the honor that continues to be paid to Secretary Brown and his delegation. (PWard)

14. (U) EMBASSY ZAGREB PARTICIPATES IN CROATIA'S PREMIER TOURISM SHOW:

CROTOUR, Croatia's premier tourism show, was held from April 1-5 in Zagreb. For the first time, Embassy Zagreb participated, setting up a booth to showcase U.S. travel destinations to the Croatian public and tourism industry. The Ambassador attended the Opening Ceremony of CROTOUR and toured the U.S. booth with Croatia's Minister of Tourism Bajs. At a reception hosted by the U.S. Commercial Service that evening, the Ambassador encouraged attendees to visit the United States, visit the new tourism website ([www.discoveramerica.gov](http://www.discoveramerica.gov)) and use the U.S. Commercial Service office as a resource for travel related information. The U.S. booth provided information on destinations including New York City, San Francisco and Washington D.C. Numerous U.S. cities were presented through promotional DVDs and slideshows. A representative from the Consular Section was available to discuss the visa process for Croatians traveling to the U.S. A representative from the Institute for the Development of Education also gave a presentation promoting educational study in the U.S. (PWard)

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15. (U) U.S. EMBASSY DONATES BOOKS TO ROMA MAJORITY SCHOOL IN MEDJIMUREJE:

In celebration of International Roma Day, Deputy Chief of Mission Vivian Walker visited the Dr. Ivan Novak elementary school in Macinec, donating 400 English-language books to the school library. The school's is the only elementary school in Croatia where Roma constitute a majority of the students. Students begin learning English from the first grade. The books were provided by the Zagreb Office of the Sabre Foundation, a U.S. NGO dedicated to improving education through donations of books and educational materials. During the visit, Ms. Walker met with Roma students from various grade levels, received a tour of the school from the Principal, Prof. Bozena Dogsa, and was treated to a number of performances from the children as part of their spring recital. (JNCallahan)

16. (U) LNG HRVATSKA ESTABLISHED, NEXT TO JOIN ADRIA LNG CONSORTIUM:

On April 6, INA, HEP and Plinacro signed the long-awaited agreement establishing LNG Hrvatska: HEP will own 56 percent, INA will own 40 percent, and Plinacro will own 4 percent. LNG Hrvatska will be the Croatian party of the Adria LNG consortium, with a 25 percent stake. The consortium currently comprises E.ON Ruhrgas, Total S.A., OMV, RWE, and Geoplin. (DMatijas)  
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